Nova Scotia Department of the Environment
2000/2001 Business Plan
April, 2000

1.0 Planning Context

The Nova Scotia Department of the Environment is the lead agency responsible for protecting and managing the environment. The Department provides a range of regulatory, educational and stewardship programs to manage and protect the Province's air and water resources, wilderness areas and nature reserves, as well as to promote waste-resource management and innovative environmental technologies.

The Department was established in 1973 by the *Environmental Protection Act*. The Department began as a regulatory agency which focused on command-and-control models to protect the environment.

By 1993, environmental protection in Nova Scotia was governed by 16 statutes and 44 sets of regulations administered by the Department of the Environment. In consultation with the public, the Department undertook a process in 1993/94 to review, revise and consolidate the existing legislation into a single Act. The resulting legislation, the *Environment Act*, came into force on January 1, 1995. While preserving and strengthening the Department's traditional regulatory role, the new Act also provided an innovative and progressive legislative framework which has facilitated greater public involvement, the establishment of industry and community stewardship programs, and the development and commercialization of local environmental technologies.

The Department employs 218 staff, approximately 68% of whom provide direct services to local communities from district offices located throughout the province. Regional staff focus on inspection, approval, enforcement and monitoring duties.

In 1998, responsibility for Protected Areas was transferred to the Department of the Environment from the Department of Natural Resources. The Protected Areas division is responsible for wilderness areas, nature reserves, heritage rivers and the inventory and evaluation of natural areas within the province.

Regional offices and the Protected Areas division are supported by staff based in Halifax. The Halifax office is responsible for program planning and development, the establishment of standards, tracking environmental trends, facilitating the development of Nova Scotian environmental industries, and other duties. All offices serve a broad client base that includes the general public, community groups, and industry.

The core business functions of the Department can be broadly divided into the following categories (see section 4.0 for details):

- inspection, monitoring and enforcement;
- stewardship and education;
- natural areas protection;
- technological innovation; and,
- policy development.

1.1 Budget Context

The Department has a budget of $13,132 million for 2000/01, which is allocated as follows:

2000/01 Budget Allocation by Core Business Function

Core Business Function	Allocation (%)
Inspection, Monitoring and Enforcement	62%
Stewardship and Education	9%
Natural Areas Protection	5%
Technological Innovation	5%
Policy Development	6%
Other	13%

1.2 Major Challenges

- Increasing volume and complexity of environmental protection issues: As scientific knowledge provides us with better information about our environment, new issues have begun to emerge (i.e. biodiversity, biotechnology), while other concerns have been confirmed or strengthened (i.e. climate change). With limited resources, the Department continuously explores alternative options for service delivery that will make more effective and efficient use of our resources to protect the environment.

- Balancing traditional and innovative approaches to compliance: Promoting compliance with environmental legislation and regulations is a vital component of the Department's work. New tools for promoting compliance have begun to emerge, including the use of pollution prevention planning, environmental management systems and codes of practice. An ongoing challenge facing the Department is to maintain an appropriate balance between traditional enforcement and more progressive and proactive tools for achieving compliance.

2.0 Mission

The Department's mission reflects its statutory responsibility to protect the Province's environment, effectively manage the environment, and ensure compliance with environmental legislation and regulations.

> The Mission of the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment is to protect, manage, and promote a healthy environment.

3.0 Strategic Goals

The strategic goals reflect the main activities undertaken by the Department to fulfill the mission statement. The goals are pursued by staff in their daily work, with specific focus on the implementation of priorities outlined in the business plan.

Strategic Goals

Goal	Definition	Recent Activities
1. Improve the level of environmental management and protection.	·Create a healthy environment by addressing legislative and regulatory requirements and providing for public involvement. ·Set standards and address specific issues to promote sustainable management of Nova Scotia's environment and its resources.	·Increased solid waste diversion from 7% to 44% from 1995-1999, substantially reducing the amount of land required for landfills. ·Protected 285,000 hectares with the 1998 passage of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, increasing the percentage of the province formally protected from less than 3% to more than 8%. ·Developed statements of provincial interest with Housing & Municipal Affairs on flood plain and water supply watershed protection. ·Developed actions with the New England Governors/ Eastern Canadian Premiers on acid rain and mercury.
2. Provide efficient and cost-effective program and service delivery.	·Through ongoing program/legislative review and evaluation, ensure that the goals and priorities of the Department are achieved within its allocated resources.	·Initiated a review of the *Environment Act* in 1999/2000 to better serve the public and protect the environment. ·Initiated a review of the Department's programs and activities in 1999/2000 to refocus resources in accordance with priorities. ·Reduced unnecessary delays in housing starts and reallocated NSDOE resources to core responsibilities by accrediting the private sector to design and install household sewage disposal systems.

Goal	Definition	Recent Activities
3. Support innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development.	·Encourage innovative environmental management techniques (ie. pollution prevention, environmental management systems and environmental education). ·Promote Nova Scotia based technologies to solve local environmental issues.	·Contributed to the doubling of employment in the environmental sector in Nova Scotia between 1994 and 1998. ·Through the coordination of innovative local technologies, the cost of delivering new water and wastewater projects to municipalities and industry has been reduced by 65%. ·Existing process for environmental assessment recognizes and encourages innovative approaches to sustainable development.
4. Promote stewardship of the environment through partnerships with various organizations.	·Partner with individuals, industry and communities to encourage a mutual and shared responsibility for the environment.	·Developed a stewardship agreement with the Atlantic Dairy Council to increase recycling of milk containers. ·Collaborated with Watershed Committees in the Bras d'Or to encourage community participation in activities directed toward protection of the lakes as a valued resource, as well as compatible economic development activities. ·Partnerships are being developed with local community groups in support of nature tourism initiatives in designated wilderness areas. · Signed a pollution prevention memorandum of understanding with the Nova Scotia Dental Association to address environmental concerns, including the safe disposal of mercury from dental offices.

4.0 Core Business Functions

The core business functions are as follows:

- Inspection, Monitoring and Enforcement: The Department is responsible for the enforcement of legislation and for related inspection and approval processes. Regulatory compliance is achieved through a range of collaborative and punitive measures.

  Through the approval process, the Department employs a flexible yet effective method of ensuring environmental protection while facilitating economic growth. By avoiding a "cookie cutter" approach to environmental protection, innovative and unique solutions are encouraged. Through a program of cross-training, the Department has improved the skill level of our field staff and, through the implementation of a risk-based approach to auditing, we will be ensuring that staff resources are utilized in the areas of greatest environmental concern.

- Stewardship / Education: Growing recognition of human impacts on environmental quality is increasing public support for stewardship activities by communities, industries and individuals. Stewardship activities include programs managed by conservation groups and industry associations, industry funded programs, and legislated programs.

  In support of stewardship activities, the Department develops and delivers programs which educate the public about conservation and environmental management issues. Public access to information and broad based public consultations are also supported to increase knowledge and encourage input into decision making. For example, the Department partnered with the local community on a program to educate boaters, raise awareness of water management issues threatening the Bras d'Or Lakes, and promote solutions that each boater could implement.

- Natural Areas Protection: The Department is responsible for the protection of natural areas that are representative of Nova Scotia's typical landscapes and ecosystems, as well as natural sites and features that are unique, rare or of other outstanding natural value. Protected areas support biodiversity and sustainability objectives, and contribute to the natural infrastructure that supports nature tourism and community development. For example, through participation with the interagency PLACES Committee, the Department is developing recommendations to encourage and facilitate private land conservation.

- Technological Innovation: Resolving environmental problems, such as the lack of a clean drinking water supply, can be hampered because of the high cost of conventional solutions. Through promotion and support for Nova Scotia based environmental technologies, the Department contributes to enhanced environmental protection, as well as sustainable economic development. For example, the village of Sherbrooke was able to obtain a clean drinking water supply while saving close to $1 million (when considered against a

conventional water treatment plant) by utilizing innovative local technology. Showcasing these technologies in Nova Scotia is the first step in helping local businesses market their products to the rest of the world.

- Policy Development: The Department is responsible for developing policies to ensure sound environmental management and protection programs. Legislation, regulations, policies, standards, and guidelines are continually developed or updated to address new and evolving issues.

5.0 Priorities for 2000/01

Goal #1 Improve the level of environmental management and protection.

Contaminated Sites Management

Contaminated sites are a constant reminder of the level of human impact on the environment. The Department will develop a comprehensive strategy for managing contaminated sites in the coming year, and is committed to remediating these sites through the following measures:

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Transportation & Public Works
Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME)
Atlantic PIRI

- developing a comprehensive strategy for managing contaminated sites, compiling an inventory of sites, and determining priority areas for remediation; and
- ensuring that site remediation occurs in an environmentally sound manner and that provincial environmental interests are properly protected.

Wastewater Treatment

30% of all sewage generated in NS is released untreated to the environment. 45% of the sewage is treated by household sewage disposal systems. Inadequacies have been identified with existing infrastructure which treats the remaining 25%.

Specific priorities for dealing with wastewater treatment in 2000/01 include:

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
Voluntary Planning

- reducing the level of discharge of raw sewage into coastal waters and ensuring

that household sewage disposal systems are properly used and maintained; and

- developing a provincial Wastewater Treatment Strategy, following public consultations, which will outline key issues, examine new technologies, define potential roles, and identify potential partnerships.

Water Resource Management

It is now widely recognized that water resources play a vital role in the social and economic fabric of the Province. Recreation, tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and many other sectors rely heavily on the accessibility of clean water.

The Department's Water Resource Management Strategy is under development, and approval and implementation of this strategy will be a focus during the year.

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Natural Resources
Dept. of Agriculture and Marketing
Dept. of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Dept. of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Dept. of Economic Development
Dept. of Tourism & Culture
Dept. of Transportation & Public Works
Municipalities
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Environment Canada
Various Environmental Organizations

Specific priorities include:

- improving water supply management by working cooperatively with municipalities to access a clean water supply, and with farmers to secure a water supply for present and future irrigation requirements.

Protected Areas Management

The Protected Areas program plays a central role in the maintenance of biodiversity, contributes significantly to sustainable management and use of air, water and land resources, and supports nature tourism and community development, particularly in rural settings. Currently, designated Wilderness Areas and Nature Reserves contribute to the protection of approximately 20% of Nova Scotia's Crown land, and approximately 8% of the province. These percentages include all protected areas, including federal migratory bird sanctuaries, and nature conservancy sites. Resource inventories developed for protected areas planning and management are important resources for land use planning, environmental assessments, outdoor education, nature tourism, community development, and voluntary private land conservation.

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Natural Resources
Dept. of Economic Development
Dept. of Tourism & Culture
Sport and Recreation Commission
Conservation Organizations
Community Groups
Landowners

Specific priorities for 2000/01 include:

- planning and managing designated wilderness areas, nature reserves and heritage rivers;
- encouraging/facilitating protection of significant natural sites and features on private lands by partnering with organizations and private landowners;
- inventorying and evaluating natural sites and features to guide protected area planning and establishment, and support the conservation of areas of natural significance and nature tourism potential on both Crown and private lands;
- supporting community initiatives that rely on protected areas as essential components of the infrastructure base for nature tourism; and
- initiating an update to Nova Scotia's Protected Area Strategy and Action Plan to guide initiatives beyond 2000.

Goal # 2 Provide efficient and cost-effective program and service delivery.

Legislative Review

In accordance with the requirements of the *Environment Act*, the Department is undertaking a comprehensive review of the legislative framework. An external Advisory Committee has been established to oversee the legislative review process and submit recommendations to the Minister of the Environment by July 1, 2000.

Corporate Linkages:

All Provincial Government Departments
Various Environmental Organizations
Various Industry Organizations
Municipalities
Fisheries & Oceans Canada
Environment Canada
Health Canada
Natural Resources Canada
Agriculture & Agrifood Canada

- Through implementation of the review, the Department will work with government, the public and client groups to review and refine the legislation, refocus the mandate and allocation of resources, and improve the Department's ability to serve the public and protect the environment.
- The Department will support the work of the Committee, including coordination of seven regional meetings in the spring of 2000, to encourage greater public input into the review process.

Services Review

The Department will initiate a review of its current programs, services, and activities. The primary focus of this review will be to ensure that the Department's limited resources are distributed appropriately, and that NSDOE is meeting its regulatory obligations with respect to enforcement and monitoring. Specific actions include:

- reviewing current departmental programs, services, and activities, and, in conjunction with legislative review, reassessing strategic direction, effectiveness and efficiency of programs/activities, and the appropriateness of resource allocation.

Risk Based Auditing

- Implement a risk based approach to auditing to provide staff with tools to more accurately assess the level of environmental risk associated with approved activities, and to allocate monitoring and inspection resources accordingly.

On-Site Sewage Management

The Department will continue to encourage the private sector to play a greater role in the design and installation of household (on-site) sewage disposal systems. Specific actions include:

- implementing a regulatory framework allowing for greater involvement by qualified private sector individuals in the selection and design of household sewage disposal systems. This initiative will increase job creation opportunities while allowing departmental resources to be reallocated to other critical monitoring and inspection functions.

Goal #3 **Support innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development.**

Environmental Industries and Technologies

The promotion of environmental industries and innovative environmental technologies has helped to secure access to clean drinking water supplies and new wastewater treatment systems. By using cost-effective, locally built technologies, municipalities and industry have realized cost savings of up to 65%.

Key priorities include:

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Economic Development
Dept. of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Dept. of Natural Resources
Dept. of Transportation & Public Works
Dept. of Agriculture and Marketing
Municipalities
Environmental Industries Association
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Canadian International Development Agency
National Research Council
Industry Canada
Environment Canada
Dept. of Foreign Affairs & International Trade

- addressing environmental challenges and increasing job creation by working with staff, local businesses, municipalities and other government departments to promote cost effective and innovative environmental solutions and technologies; and

- assisting in the development, demonstration, and export growth of environmental technologies by researching trends, evaluating technologies and providing business advice to entrepreneurs.

Goal #4 **Promote stewardship of the environment through partnerships with various organizations.**

Solid Waste-Resource Management Strategy

By the end of 2000, the Province will divert the amount of solid waste going to disposal by 50% from 1989 levels. As of October 1999, 44% solid waste diversion had been achieved, with approximately 95% of all Nova Scotians having access to curbside recycling programs and over 70% having access to curbside organic collection. Other municipal composting programs coming on-stream in 2000 will further support the diversion goals.

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Housing & Municipal Affairs
Dept. of Transportation & Public Works
Municipalities
Resource Recovery Fund Board
Clean Nova Scotia
Various Environmental Organizations
Various Industry Organizations

Specific solid waste management priorities for 2000/2001 include:

- achieving the Province's goal of 50% diversion through support and monitoring of municipal recycling and composting programs;

- facilitating industry stewardship agreements to increase the level of responsibility assumed by industry for the post-industrial and post-consumer fate of goods and materials such as waste paint and newsprint; and

- investigating and initiating programs to address littering and illegal dumping in collaboration with municipalities and industry.

Green Plan

The Department will build on the information gained through the legislative review and services review and, in collaboration with other departments, agencies and organizations, design and implement a public consultation process, culminating in the development of a "green" plan for the Province in 2003.

Corporate Linkages:

All Provincial Government Departments
Various Federal Government Departments
Various Environmental Organizations

Environmental Education

The Environmental Education Program raises public awareness of environmental issues, trends in environmental quality, environmental legislation and programs, and supports environmental stewardship efforts.

Corporate Linkages:

Dept. of Natural Resources
Resource Recovery Fund Board
Clean Nova Scotia
Environment Canada
Various Environmental Organizations
New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers

2000/2001 priorities include:

- developing, delivering and evaluating environmental education materials in support of departmental priorities, including increasing awareness of options for water management and for the maintenance and installation of household sewage disposal systems.

6.0 Budgeting Context

NSDOE's budget allocation for fiscal year 2000-01 is $13,132 million. The budget will be allocated to the Department's four core business functions as follows:

- inspection, monitoring, and enforcement 62%
- stewardship and education 9%
- natural areas protection 5%
- technological innovation 5%
- policy development 6%.

The remaining 13% of the budget is allocated to central services such as information technology, technical/professional training, and legal services which support the core business functions, as well as the Minister's and Deputy Minister's offices.

The Department's budget allocation decisions reflect:

- the central role of inspection, monitoring and enforcement activities in enabling NSDOE to fulfill its statutory mandate;
- the critical importance of stewardship and education in achieving environmental protection, particularly with respect to pollution prevention, water resource management, protected areas management and solid waste-resource management;
- the importance of protecting Nova Scotia's natural areas;
- the contribution of environmental industries and technologies to both environmental protection and economic development; and
- the importance of an effective policy and legislative framework as a basis for enhanced environmental protection.

7.0 Outcomes and Outcome Measures

Outcome	*Indicator*	*Measure*	*Notes*
Strategic Goal: Improve the level of environmental management and protection.			
Creating safe environments	Clean water, air, land	% municipal water supplies meeting Canadian Drinking Water guidelines *Health Canada, NSDOE	This is based on 2 key human health guidelines: coliform and fecal coliform.
		% population serviced by treated sewage *Housing and Municipal Affairs, NSDOE	The Department's sewage discharge strategy currently being developed will provide the basis for target setting.
		# days air quality index meeting good/excellent level *NSDOE	This applies to the Department's metro Halifax daily air quality monitoring.
	Protection of Crown land natural areas	Land dedicated to parks and protected areas ('000 ha) *Natural Resources	This relates to Government's commitment to set aside a portion of our natural heritage for future generations.
		Number of identified landscape types represented within parks and protected areas *Natural Resources	This applies to the protection of representative landscapes in wilderness areas, nature reserves, and heritage rivers.
	Private/public/community participation in pollution prevention	# of pollution prevention partnership plans in place *NSDOE	
	Community involvement in recycling	% waste diverted from landfills *RRFB, NSDOE	Diversion initiatives include landfill bans as well as recycling, deposit/refund, and composting programs.
		% beverage containers returned for refund *RRFB, NSDOE	The deposit/refund system applies to all ready-to-serve beverages with the exception of dairy products.

Outcome	*Indicator*	*Measure*	*Notes*
Strategic Goal: Promote stewardship of the environment through partnerships with various organizations.			
Increase individual and community involvement in environmental protection	Community involvement	% waterways and coastal inlets under active community stewardship *NSDNR, NSDOF&A, NSDOE, DFO, EC	
Strategic Goal: Support innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development.			
Improve private sector participation in environmental management	Private sector involvement in environmental management	total # employed in environmental services and products, academia and ENGOs	Departmental initiatives will assist in the creation of jobs in water, wastewater, soil remediation, solid waste management, etc.

*** source of data**

8.0 Communications

The Department of the Environment continues to provide employees and the public with information to assist them in interpreting and understanding the diversity of programs and opportunities offered to Nova Scotians.

Our general message is that we take a reasonable and balanced approach to solving environmental problems/challenges in Nova Scotia. However, when necessary, we will take persistent polluters to court.

Internally, it is our goal to keep staff and stakeholders aware of new initiatives and program amendments. Through communication vehicles, like a daily clippings service on environmental issues and the simultaneous release of press releases to staff and the media, staff are kept current on public issues.

Our employees, and those working most closely with us, are valuable voices in disseminating our messages consistently, both inside the department and to our external audience.

Our position, internally and externally, reflects our approach to fulfilling a diverse mandate. As a regulating body, NSDOE is responsible for the protection and preservation of the environment. But there is a proactive role the Department plays as well.

Through our various divisions, we study environmental issues and offer opportunities for Nova Scotians to develop technologies and business practices which promise positive environmental results. These key components of our mandate require us to work in partnership with the community, industry and business, assisting them in development while maintaining our responsibility as regulator. This willingness to cooperate and work together has been a key external message. It is one of responsiveness to the needs of our citizens, 'helping us, to help them'.

The underlying theme and style of our communication approach is to be proactive. We are committed to improving and doing better. We see partnership with those groups committed to the same ideals as helping us achieve that goal.

9.0 Human Resources

Through training and consultation, the Human Resources division of the CSU is able to support departmental efforts to fulfill stated priorities. Priority actions for 2000/01 include the following:

- Provide corporate consultative advice and assistance to the Department with regard to its strategic initiatives, restructuring efforts, organizational design and labour relations issues.

- Provide guidance and support to departmental managers in human resource planning, enhancing the Department's ability to meet goals and future challenges.

- Continue to support the Corporate Integrated Management Development initiative by coordinating the Succession Planning and Performance Management processes within the Department. This includes providing ongoing consultative support to managers as well as analytical and planning support to the Department throughout the process. Career planning will be provided in conjunction with this initiative.

- Continue to provide quality, cost effective, training and development opportunities and human resources programs customized to meet identified needs within the Department.

- Continue the provision of efficient personnel, payroll and benefit administration services for all employees.

- Streamline the Disability Case Management process and continue the provision of related consultative and support services leading to improved employee morale and productivity.

- Provide advice and assistance regarding Occupational Health and Safety Program changes, which ensure compliance with related legislation and the provision of a safe and healthy workplace.

- Assist managers in their Occupational Health and Safety Audit preparation by leading audit readiness exercises and follow up in their sections.

10. Information Technology

During 1999/2000, the Department invested considerable effort in developing and implementing the integrated environmental information management system (EIMAS). In 2000/2001, the Department will focus on further acceptance and integration of the new system by staff throughout the Province, as well as evaluation of the need for additional functionality to address program needs.

Other priorities for 2000/2001 include the following:

- Participate in a pilot project to coordinate regionally-based IT support among departments whose regional offices share a common location.

- Provide operational support. The IT Division provides support for business systems, desktops and networks. This includes providing telephone support through the CSU Help Desk, fixing system faults, providing enhancements, and monitoring network and server data backups.

- Provide operational planning for IT systems. The division provides a planning component for IT systems. This includes hardware capacity planning, network capacity and data connectivity planning, system component specification planning and implementation scheduling.

- Provide assistance to departmental records management staff for the selection and implementation of a province wide IT system to support the Department's records management procedures.

- Provide assistance with the on-going prioritization of divisional IT initiatives, based on the Department's business plan.

11. Financial Services

The Finance Division of the Resources CSU provides revenue collection and accounts receivable maintenance for the Department of the Environment. The CSU conducts needs assessments and provides financial analysis and consulting services. Priority issues for 2000/01 include the following:

- Examining the structure of Financial Services within the CSU model to ensure the most cost effective and efficient financial services are provided to the Department of the Environment.

- Developing and implementing a policy for the use of debit and credit cards in government offices that provide goods and services to the public. This initiative will improve the ease with which the public can access and purchase government goods and services.

- Continuing to improve the reporting capability of the provincial Central Financial Management System. Improvements to existing financial reports and the creation of new ones will improve the financial information available to civil servants.

- Demonstrating leadership in the "Buy Nova Scotia First Program" by ensuring government tendering policies (practised by the Resource Departments) allow Nova Scotian companies to compete fairly for government business.

- Strengthening fiscal accountability within the resource departments.
- Ensuring that Resource Departments Financial Quarterly information is complete and provides detailed comparative analysis from one quarter to the next.
- Continuing to improve the integration of the business planning and budget process.